

the innate love of the beautiful world, of course, be more concentrated upon nature. Accordingly, in the early period of mankind, as also in the infancy of different states, large use was made of beautiful natural objects in seasons of festivity, as emblems of happiness and rejoicing. "Let us crown ourselves," says the author of the Book of Wisdom, "with rose-buds and flowers before they wither." Early nations in all their ceremonies, whether of the banquet, the altar, or the tomb, made large use of flowers as decorations. Among the classical ancients, the wreath of the victor, and other rewards of merit, were arborescent, and this led to their extensive employment, as symbols, in architectural decorations.

I come now to the second branch of my subject, viz.—the beautiful in the Human Mind or Imagination.

"Every star in Heaven," says Emerson, "is disconcerted and inattentive; gravitation and chemistry cannot content them; ever they woo and court the eye of every beholder; every man that comes into the world they seek to fascinate and possess,—to pass into his mind, for they desire to republish themselves in a more delicate world than that they occupy. It is not enough that they are Jove, Mars, Orion, and the North Star, in the gravitating firmament; they would have such poets as Newton, Herschell, and Laplace, that they may re-exist in the finer world of rational souls, and fill that realm with their fame. These beautiful basilisks set their brute, glorious eyes, on the eye of every child, and, if they can, cause their natures to pass through his wondering eyes into him, and so all things are mixed." And so through the wondering eyes of every man, all external objects seek to pass. The aspect of nature operates insensibly upon the soul of every rational creature in proportion to his natural susceptibility, and the images reflected there, whilst modified by the original disposition and current of his being, become invigorated by his intellectual power, and enriched by the stream of education. Impressions and influences operate also from other sources, until his mind becomes

"A mansion for all lovely forms,
His memory, a dwelling place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies."

A feeling, more or less, of the beautiful in nature, is common to all, but only the artist, who, from superior intellectual power, and greater strength of imagination, has a fresher, deeper insight into the inexhaustible life around, possesses the capacity to form his ideal, and give it expression. All have the æsthetic feeling, which means sensitiveness, or susceptibility of the impress or influence of the beautiful and poetic, but few have the creative power which belongs to the artist, viz., the faculty for reproducing and embodying the feeling in some form of art,—a picture, a statue, a building, or a poem. This is what is properly termed genius, than which there is perhaps nothing more difficult to define. It has been said to consist of a refined love of nature, "a love of the flower and perfection of things, and a desire to draw a new picture, or copy of the same." Sir Joshua Reynolds must be considered incorrect when he speaks of the imagination as being a lower faculty than reason; for the creative faculty is certainly beyond those which merely perceive and compare. It is the chief part of genius,—genius, to which all creation administers. To its sleepless eye lies open all the human heart, and all the stores of nature. A frequenter of the highways and thoroughfares of life, the man of genius, whether poet, or painter, or architect, is a watcher of events, "the votary of circumstance;" alive to every influence of nature, awake to the varied and complicated truths of existence, he lives with more than life about him; and the difference between the mind of the artist or poet and ordinary minds is this,—to the latter, the model, theme, subject, or whatever else the groundwork may be called, on which the material expressions of genius are founded, appears or sounds in simple unconnectedness, unsuggested, and unsuggesting, and exciting no further sensations than are contained within its known limits; but to the true artist it is the type of a past revelation, or the symbol of something intuitively foreseen. It is a point in an infinite series, coming down from

the past, and leading off to the future in interminable perspective. And thus be to whom is given "the vision and the faculty divine," sees or hears in his subject that which, till he has materially realised it, is to other men invisible,—inadmissible. The truest, subtlest alchemy is his who, from seeming dress, works the true metal of undying thought.

Genius, however, is not always a producer: there are those who are recipients of the tide of inspiration from nature, and yet yield no fruit to the storehouse of Art. They form and nurture their ideal but for their own solace and delight. Dissatisfied with human power of execution, and free, perchance, from "that last infirmity of noble minds," they build only in the region of dream-land, and shrink from all material realization of their works, lest they should betray the grandeur of their subject. They are what a French writer calls "the virgins of the mind," who "die without leaving any trace of themselves behind them upon the earth."

The beauty existing in the mind is higher in degree than that in either of the other realms of the beautiful.—It may be considered as superior to nature, as no individual, however beautiful was its archetype; and it is superior to that in Art, as no power of execution can do justice to the conceptions of genius. It is superior both to its entelechy and to the image through which it is expressed: the eye never saw it in nature, nor, as I shall by and by endeavour to show, has the hand embodied it in Art. It is neither copied from a beautiful individual, nor compounded of the faultless features of a species, "create of every creature's best." No beauty was ever so formed, either in the mind or in Art. The mind operated upon and inspired by the general beauty of nature has become pregnant with a new beauty, greater than all. By what steps the process was conducted we can no more explain than we can the production of some vivid dream of the night from dull waking thoughts and incidents. The ideal of landscape Art is also in advance of nature; every plant, flower, and herb has its Venus or Apollo of ideal beauty: nature's general beauty has inspired and suggested a beauty beyond the individual, and ideas may be formed, and have been formed, of various inanimate objects, which perhaps no individual ever has reached, or ever will.

One object, perhaps, kindled it at first, but by constant study and observation—by catching nature in her highest moments—in her happiest moods—and fixing on marble or canvas the most fleeting beauties, it was corrected and improved. An artist once told me, that after he has placed the living model in the finest position he could think of for exhibiting the beauty and grace of the figure, by an accidental movement, he (the model) has himself immediately gone into one infinitely finer, and which he (the artist) could never have imagined nor dreamt of. This he has no sooner fixed on his canvas, than a slight and partial movement of some limb has developed a new beauty. Grace is beauty in motion, and the motion of animals, as well as of man, is constantly revealing new beauties to the eye of the delighted artist.

Thus is the ideal generated, notwithstanding the fact that natural beauty of form is dependent on fixed and determinate scientific principles, which are alike applicable to all the arts of design, and which it is the duty of the artist to investigate and study. It is a fact that, by the application of certain rules of proportion, beauty of form is produced in each art, and that the beauty of the face and figure of the Apollo is governed by precisely the same principles that reign in the temples of the Acropolis. This is a truth, however, that does not, what some writers have supposed, set aside the theory of the ideal. It is but a dead beauty that can be produced by rule. Expression is its soul and life, and this cannot be given by rule. We may point out the more prominent effect of the various passions upon the human countenance; but to communicate to marble the light, the glow, the shade of thought, the reflection of the soul on the human face, is the work of genius. The province not of rule, but of intuitive feeling. It is as true in art as it is in religion, that the letter killeth, the spirit giveth life.* S. H.

* To be continued

CHOICE OF STYLES.

WHEN an architect has to design a building now, he is beset by a difficulty which was never known in old times, but is now hardly less perplexing than it was ten years ago. The difficulty, I mean, is in deciding what style his building shall be of: and the varieties presented to his mind are neither few nor simple, including all the minor changes and even the mistakes and abortions of all times, none of which seem to be entirely condemned. With regard to churches, happily, the difficulty is almost overcome; but not at all with regard to other buildings, as the walls of any architectural exhibition bear plain witness.

The question never can be settled until the principles of each kind of architecture be well known and distinguished,—not those accidental peculiarities which every one observes, but some fundamental principles which give the character to the architecture. When these are once perceived, then we shall be able to decide which is the fit kind for our Englishmen of the nineteenth century: and the architect will have nothing to do then but to study the requirements of the building he is to design, and adapt the form of arrangement and expression to them. For it seems to me a great mistake to suppose that in the same country one style is most suitable for one sort of building, and another for another; for that which is not suitable to every sort of architectural building does not deserve the name of architecture; though I readily grant that an unlearned observer may hardly perceive that the same style is used in two buildings of a very opposite use, such as a church and a prison for instance.

I will, therefore, offer a few remarks which may tend to throw some light on the character of the different styles. Let us confine our thoughts to European architecture.

The various styles used in Europe since the beginning of civilization to this time may be divided rather roughly into three.

1. The true classical architecture which prevailed among the Greeks and Romans down to the fall of the Roman empire.
2. Mediæval architecture, which rose slowly out of its ruins, and declined and fell about the sixteenth century.
3. The revived classical, which is still prevalent.

Let us consider each of these styles:—

- 1st. As to the general form of their building.
- 2ndly. As to their mode of expression; for these two heads seem to me to comprehend the philosophy, so to speak, of architecture.

I would compare the general form of Grecian buildings to a planted grove of trees. They were even and regular, and presented the appearance of a wall, surrounded by rows of pillars, like the outermost stems of the trees while the low flat roof, sometimes there was none, was like the even top of the grove.

In the warm, sunny climate of Greece, men lived for the most part out of doors, and sat, for the whole day together, under the porticoes: it was, therefore, the outside on which most beauty was lavished, and the bright light and absence of mist and fog showed distinctly each little ornament of the capitals. The inside was to be as dark as possible, that it might seem and be more cool, and opposite to the external brightness and heat. There were, therefore, no windows, the only light being admitted by the door or the apertures in the roof. The roof was low, with just sufficient slope to let off the rain; there being no snow to rest heavily on it.

The cities of Greece had often abrupt table rocks, issuing isolatedly out of the level ground: these were always chosen for the temples and public buildings, and so the natural rock formed, as it were, the lower part of the building, to which the others were but upper stories or roofs. Thus their form harmonised with the character of the ground.

With regard to the mode of expression in classical buildings, we can speak more definitely. Their effect was produced by actual sunlight. Beautiful forms were placed round their buildings. Pillars of the most perfect shape and proportion, crowned with capitals of delicately-carved acanthus leaves, supported an entablature in which line followed line and ornament ornament in undeviating regularity above all was a pediment filled with the most beautiful sculpture of some historical or mythological subject which was well known to the